

# TUTORING NEWS: INSPIRED YOUTH

5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660, 773-561-4759, inspiredyouth2@yahoo.com

www.inspiredyouthchicago.org, www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth

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### INSPIRED YOUTH SUMMER PIANO PROGRAM

It was one of the hottest summers in Chicago on record, and 45 piano students came to Edgewater Presbyterian Church to take piano lessons on keyboards with Inspired Youth. The students came for one-hour lessons twice a week for 7½ weeks to learn new pieces and practice them with 20 “volunteer piano tutors” who came regularly in varying schedules throughout the three to five sessions per day/7½ weeks to teach the students.

The students came even in the very hot weather. On July 5, when the temperature was forecast for over 100°, we decided to cancel the lessons (remembering the deadly heat wave in 1995). On July 3 when the temperature had been in the high 90s, a 6-year old girl and her mother came in with bright red faces from having walked there, and we decided over 100° wasn't safe. On July 5 when we called around to all the students to tell them there were no piano lessons that day, a shy 13-year old girl kept asking, “Why aren't we having the piano classes?” She didn't see why the lessons should be canceled. She wanted to come.

The last event of the summer program was the final recital in which 38 students played one or two pieces, either as a solo or as a duet with a piano tutor. All the students had worked hard on their pieces. All were very serious, and all played well. The audience of over 96 people enjoyed every piece.

### EIGHT STUDENTS WERE ACCOMPANISTS!

Have you ever played a song on the piano and have people sing with you? It is very difficult and takes a lot of experience. Even if the performer makes a mistake and wants to play something over again or loses their place, the audience keeps on singing. The high light of the 2012 piano recital was that eight students played pieces for the audience to sing. The songs were “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” “It's a Small World,” “Over the Rainbow,” “Do-Re-Mi,” “Music Alone Shall Live,” “Firm Foundation,” “Mighty to Save,” and “God Is So

Good.” All the students played well and the audience enjoyed singing.

### AN IDEA GROWS

This part of the Summer Piano Program grew bit by bit. The piano series we regularly use for the students is Alfred's beginning piano books. They introduce new piano concepts gradually, and the kids easily experience success as they work on the short pieces. In 2010 a piano tutor brought in two other books of “Favorites” for some of the students. In 2011 we assigned pieces from the books to a few other students.

This May we ordered 9 other titles of jazz and show tunes in that beginning series. Earlier in the year one of the choir members had said, “Why does \_\_\_\_\_ only get to play pieces for the youth choir to sing? Why don't other people get a chance to play for the choir?” So when the new piano books arrived, we assigned pieces the choir could sing to choir members who were in the summer piano program. The surprise was that none of the kids knew any of the songs which we assumed were part of popular culture. The exciting thing was that the students loved practicing the songs--the ones mentioned above and nine others from the new books. All the students played their assigned songs well. The songs were a hit.

### STUDENTS AND PIANO TUTORS

The 45 students in the 2012 Summer Piano Program ranged from age 5 to adult. A few were ages 5-7; there was one adult and one high school student. Most of the students were in the 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades. 27 of the students were new this summer. A few had taken lessons last summer. Several had participated in the program for several years. Of the 7 students who were not able to play in the final recital, a family of 3 bought a house in mid-July and moved. One boy was in the hospital, one was practicing for a quinceañera. One student dropped out, and the adult didn't play in the recital. All the other students played in the final recital.

The hands of the students were beautiful. A 6-year old girl had such small fingers that they barely reached the black keys. An older student had such large fingers that they barely fit between the black keys. All the fingers learned to play the keyboard.

The 45 students in the 2012 Summer Piano Program were David Asinyanbi, Phyllis Asinyanbi, Osvaldo Avila, Susi Castaneda, Joshua Cerrano, Matthew Cerrano, Alfonso Dominguez, Felix Dominguez, Fernando Dominguez, Fatima Escartin, Jalen Eskridge, Josue Estrada, Analucia Galindo, Eduardo Galindo, Ingrid Garcia, Marco Garcia, Edward Gomez, Leslie Gomez, Brenda Herrera, Joaun Lara, Oscar Lopez, Stephanie Lopez, Brian Maldonado, Luis Angel Maldonado, Guadalupe Marcial, Anahi Martinez, Leoncio Martinez, David Ramirez, Edgar Ramirez, Jennifer Ramirez, Michel Ramirez, Anya Reyes, Ashley Reyes, Alex Reyes, Thanya Reynoso, Deyse Salas, Joanna Salas, Jovanny Salinas, Valeria Soto, Garvin Tetuh, Fidel Vasquez, Lexy Vasquez, Luisa Vasquez, Brandon Wood, and Elija Wood.

Most of the 20 volunteer piano tutors in the 2012 Summer Piano Program came from Chicago. Two tutors came from Oak Park, two came from Riverside, one came from Schaumburg, and one came from Taiwan! All the piano tutors were wonderful for the children. The volunteer piano tutors were Heidi Aylesworth, Jim Conlon, Michael Daly, Diane Danek, Terri Edelson, Lily Eligator, , Anne Gallery, Kelly Glavin, , Doris Huang, Jamie McDunn, Beth Palmer, Nina Pellizzari, Maurine Peterson, Ken Roman, Stanley Rutledge, Lauren Sandherr, Ben Steinbuhler, Luisa Vasquez, Jill Werner, and Natividad (Didi) Yabes.

### **BLOCK PARTY FEATURES PERFORMERS**

In mid-August, Edgewater Presbyterian Church held its annual Block Party. It started out with delicious fancy sandwiches, hotdogs, chips, and ice cream floats for everyone!

While people lined up for the food, a group of 5 drummers set up a constant, festive rhythm on congas and other drums. (The leader of the drummers was Tamara Clark, grandmother of a student in Inspired Youth.)

As the people were eating, a combined choir of Inspired Youth Singers and Church School Singers sang, the Creative Writing Class performed a rap, and the Northeast Quadrant Drill Team performed. The day was a perfect summer day: bright sunshine,

in the mid 80's, with beautiful music and good food.

26 singers of the Inspired Youth Singers and Church School Singers, directed by Dorie Burrell and Beth Palmer, sang a medley of 11 songs-- contemporary Christian music and older show tunes. For 9 of the 11 songs, 7 different children accompanied the choir on the keyboard. That was amazing! A student has to know a piece very well in order to accompany singers. And these songs were not specifically written for beginning piano students; they were written just for the music and the words. But all the students played well, and the choir sang beautifully.

10 students of the Creative Writing Class did a rap about doing well in school and striving in life. The rap was directed by James Burrell, with Lamont Burrell doing a solo rap in the middle. The audience really liked the group.

The final piece was a performance by the Northeast Quadrant Drill Team, directed by Dorie Burrell. Ten students dressed in bright purple T-shirts and carrying purple and white flags and pom-poms performed several moves. The flags were stunning in the bright sunlight. They furred in the gentle breeze as the students whipped them around. These ten children had just joined the drill team three weeks ago, and this was the first time they had performed in public. They had to learn all the moves from scratch. They did a good job, and we hope to see them again soon. A video of the Drill Team and the Creative Writing Class will soon be on Inspired Youth's Facebook page, along with photos of the combined choir.

Over 64 people were at the Block Party from these groups, including performers, parents, relatives, siblings, and friends,. The Block Party was a chance for the church and neighbors to come together. It was a happy day.

### **TRIPS TO MILLENNIUM PARK**

11 students and 3 adults went to Millennium Park on Tuesday, Aug. 14. 8 students and 2 adults went on Thursday, Aug. 16.

On Tuesday, the students ages 5-14 had fun playing on the bronze cow at the Cultural Center. In the Family Tent they learned about friction as they pulled a table cloth out from under (plastic) dishes, and if they pulled fast enough, the dishes stayed on the table while the table cloth was pulled away. Sometimes the dishes crashed onto the floor.

Myeesha (6<sup>th</sup> gr.) was the best! The students also loved the hoola hoops. Darryl did three at once!

Lili, going to kindergarten in the fall, was the star. She saw the books in the reading section and pulled Fifi over to read with her. An adult read stories to them for 20 minutes. Then all the students went to build towers with thin, flat blocks (6" x 1"). They built towers for over half an hour. Lili and Fifi's tower was taller than Fifi! And it didn't fall down! (See the picture on [www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth](http://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth).)

The students got to listen to the Grant Park Orchestra in the Pritzker Pavilion. They walked on the high bridge leading to the Art Institute. They ate lunch, and looking through a grate, watched a metra train go under them. They saw a show featuring Ms. Lori. They made designs with their body on the curved mirror surface of "The Bean" (Cloud Gate). And they played in the Crown Fountain and got all wet, even the ones who wore sweaters and didn't bring a change of clothes. Good time had by all.

Thursday was pouring rain as the students aged 9-14 boarded the #147 bus in Uptown to go to Millennium Park. When the students reached the Family Tent (tent!) the rain finally stopped. They listened to a lot of music, a singer from the Old Town School of Folk Music, a fast-strumming country group (the Dog Patch Ramblers), and the Grant Park Orchestra. The group walked across the high bridge to the Art Institute, enjoyed putting their feet in the little brook, and walked in the Lurie Gardens. It was surreal when jets began practicing for the weekend Air and Water Show. The students

were walking in the Lurie Gardens with music from the Grant Park Orchestra wafting through the air, when the roar of fighter jets pierced the peaceful scene.

Finally the students got to go to the Crown Fountain and get wet. They had a great time. Two cousins played tag around the huge obelisk that spurted water. It was a good day.

Pictures of both trips to Millennium Park are on [www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth](http://www.facebook.com/inspiredyouth).

### **DONATIONS TO INSPIRED YOUTH, INC.**

Inspired Youth does a lot with minimal funds to enrich the lives of children and families in Uptown/Edgewater in Chicago, because of the many people who volunteer.

Inspired Youth has a wide range of donors. In the past year, gifts have come from a foundation, law firm, service organization, church women's group, and around 40 individuals, including present and former tutors, parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Wilmette Jr. High School, pastors, friends, family, and community members. Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$7,000. Inspired Youth appreciates all these donations.

Inspired Youth Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS, so donations are tax deductible.

Contributions to Inspired Youth can be made through PayPal on the Donations page of the website: [www.inspiredyouthchicago.org](http://www.inspiredyouthchicago.org), or mailed to "Inspired Youth," 5715 N. Ridge, Chicago, IL 60660.